

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SAM-01 SAJ-01 EB-07 MC-02

ACDA-05 AF-06 AID-05 IGA-02 DHA-02 ORM-02 OMB-01

TRSE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03 PRS-01 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 /084 W

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P R 171613Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6403

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

JCS WASHDC

USMISSION NATO

USNMR SHAPE BEL

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

DIA WASHDC

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1725

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MASS, PO

SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE FORCE DEVELOPMENT

REF: (A) LISBON 1635 (DTG 131137Z 76), (B) LISBON 1647
(DTG 151140Z MAR 76)

SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF
PAF PRIORITIES ARE (1) FBA, (2) TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT AND (3)
MPA. PAF FEELS IT HAS BOTH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL
MISSIONS AND NEEDS ONE AIRCRAFT TO SATISFY BOTH. IDEALLY
THIS WOULD BE F-4, BUT PAF RECOGNIZES THAT PRESENT STATE OF
PORTUGUESE ECONOMY AND RESULTING DEPENDENCE ON ALLIES FOR
EQUIPMENT SUPPLY MAY DICTATE A LESS SOPHISTICATED AIRCRAFT.
END SUMMARY.

1. ACCOMPANIED BY DATT, I MET EVENING OF MARCH 16

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WITH PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE (PAF) CHIEF OF STAFF

MORAIS DA SILVA AND HIS DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR OPERATIONS, GENERAL SILVA CARDOSO, AND LOGISTICS, BRIG LEMOS FERREIRA. PRINCIPAL PURPOSE OF THE VISIT WAS TO DETERMINE PAF PRIORITIES IN ACQUISITION OF AIRCRAFT, PARTICULARLY AS THESE PRIORITIES MIGHT RELATE TO THE COMBINED ARMS BRIGADE PROPOSAL. AT OUTSET I STRESSED THAT USG DID NOT WISH TO INTERFERE IN DETERMINATION OF MISSION FOR PAF, BUT OUR JOINT NATO RESPONSIBILITIES MADE IT IMPORTANT THAT WE HAVE A COMMON CONCEPT OF THIS MISSION AND THAT EQUIPMENT REQUESTS FIT INTO MISSION CONTEXT. MORAIS DA SILVA AGREED AND SAID THIS MATTER HAD BEEN THOROUGHLY DEBATED. GOP HAD TWO WEEKS AGO ARRIVED AT A FIRM POSITION.

2. THIS POSITION WAS BASED ON A RECOGNITION THAT PAF HAD BOTH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS. OBVIOUSLY, FIRST PRIORITY HAD TO BE GIVEN TO NATIONAL MISSION. THIS INCLUDED NOT ONLY A CAPACITY TO DEFEND PORTUGAL AGAINST AGGRESSION, BUT ALSO ENCOMPASSED SUCH INTANGIBLE ASPECTS AS MORALE AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT. FBA AIRCRAFT ARE MANDATORY IN TERMS OF FULFILLING NATIONAL MISSION.

3. PORTUGAL WAS ALSO KEENLY AWARE OF ITS NATO RESPONSIBILITIES. INTERNATIONAL MISSION INCLUDED NOT ONLY SUPPORT FOR BRIGADE BUT ALSO A REQUIREMENT FOR A MARITIME ATTACK CAPABILITY. HE NOTED THAT DEVELOPMENTS IN AFRICA HAD HEIGHTENED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE "AZOREAN-MADEIRA-PORTUGUESE TRIANGLE" TO WESTERN DEFENSE.

4. MORAIS DA SILVA SAID THERE WERE AIRCRAFT WHICH COULD FULFILL ONE MISSION BUT NOT THE OTHER, AND PORTUGAL COULD NOT AFFORD THE LUXURY OF MAINTAINING TWO DIFFERENT TYPES OF COMBAT AIRCRAFT. F-5'S MIGHT BE SATISFACTORY FOR THE NATIONAL MISSION, BUT THEY LACKED THE NECESSARY MARITIME ATTACK CAPABILITY. A-7'S WOULD FULFILL THE MARITIME ATTACK REQUIREMENT BUT WOULD NOT MEET NATIONAL NEEDS. ONLY AIRCRAFT THAT WOULD DO BOTH WAS F-4.

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5. PAF HAD DECIDED FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS TO ESTABLISH CLOSER LINKS WITH PORTUGUESE ARMY. IN THIS CONNECTION, TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FOR THE BRIGADE BECAME IMPORTANT. C-130'S, WHICH COULD ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO THE NATIONAL MISSION, OCCUPIED SECOND PRIORITY. P-3'S WERE THIRD PRIORITY.

6. ALTHOUGH FIRST PRIORITY WENT TO FBA, PAF WAS

SENSITIVE TO GOP'S PRESENT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. IT HAD, THEREFORE, DECIDED TO USE THE PROCEEDS OF THE SALE OF ITS PRESENT AIRCRAFT FOR C-130'S (REF B). MORAIS DA SILVA COMMENTED THAT HE WOULD BE HEAVILY CRITICIZED HAD HE ELECTED TO PURCHASE COMBAT AIRCRAFT RIGHT NOW.

7. I NOTED THAT PORTUGAL'S ALLIES WOULD HAVE THE SAME PROBLEM IN FURNISHING AIRCRAFT TO GOP. THE F-4 WAS A SOPHISTICATED WEAPON, AND IT WOULD BE VERY HARD TO JUSTIFY THIS KIND OF AIRCRAFT WHEN WE ARE ENGAGED, FOR EXAMPLE, IN FURNISHING AID TO DESTITUTE ANGOLAN REFUGEES. DATT NOTED THAT PAF HAD APPARENTLY ABANDONED ANY TRANSITION CONCEPTS AND WAS MAKING THE BIG LEAP FROM OBSOLETE AIRCRAFT TO FIRST LINE FIGHTERS.

8. MORAIS DA SILVA SAID HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD OUR CONCERNS. HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES STRESSED THAT THEY HAD DEVELOPED THE IDEAL POSITION. "FOR ME TO HAVE DEVELOPED THE PAF MISSION AND EQUIPMENT NEEDS ON THE BASIS OF EQUIPMENT AVAILABILITY WOULD HAVE BEEN OPPORTUNISTIC," MORAIS DA SILVA SAID. PAF RECOGNIZED THAT IT WAS DEPENDENT ON ITS ALLIES AND THAT F-4 MIGHT NOT BE PRACTICAL WITHIN A REASONABLE TIME FRAME. OBVIOUSLY, THEN, DECISIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE ON THE BASIS OF WHAT MIGHT BE AVAILABLE. THEY FEEL STRONGLY ON ONE POINT HOWEVER; THE PAF SHOULD NOT MOVE AHEAD WITH AIRCRAFT GEARED SOLELY TO INTERNATIONAL MISSION, SUCH AS P-3'S, WITHOUT FIRST MODERNIZING AN FBA SQUADRON. C-130'S WOULD BE HELPFUL IN FULFILLING NATIONAL MISSION, BUT FBA WERE ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL.

9. AT END OF CONVERSATION, I REVIEWED PRIORITIES AS
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I UNDERSTOOD THEM: (1) FBA, (2) C-130'S, AND (3) P-3'S. HE AGREED. I STRESSED THAT OUR CONVERSATION OBVIOUSLY DID NOT ENTAIL ANY COMMITMENT, NOTING THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN CONTINUING ENTIRE U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. MORAIS DA SILVA SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS, BUT HOPED PORTUGAL'S ALLIES WOULD HELP IT BECOME A FULL-FLEDGED NATO PARTNER.
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